



For Immediate Release: August 24, 2007

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Today Marks the One Year Anniversary of Plan B Emergency Contraception Over-the-Counter

While access has improved, barriers remain.

Washington D.C. – One year ago today, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved over-the-counter (OTC) access to Plan B[®] emergency contraception for women 18 years and older. After years of delay and denial, this was a victory for most women, all of which deserve easier access to this safe and effective method of preventing pregnancy. Increased availability coupled with greater awareness about Plan B has allowed more women to take advantage of this pregnancy prevention option: Barr Pharmaceuticals, Inc. reports that sales this year are expected to be double last year's figures.

“The success of this first year clearly demonstrates the demand for easier access to back-up birth control,” said Kirsten Moore, President and CEO of the Reproductive Health Technologies Project (RHTP). “The FDA should stop hiding behind safety concerns that have now shown to be false and put Plan B on pharmacy shelves next to the condoms.”

Despite the FDA's decision, barriers remain for younger women. The unnecessary and unwarranted age restriction requires young women 17 years and under – as well as women without government-issued IDs – to jump through additional hoops to obtain a prescription for this time-sensitive product.

“We are continuing our work to educate women, pharmacists, and the public on the safety and effectiveness of Plan B for all women of reproductive age,” Moore said.

Plan B is an FDA-approved, back-up birth control method that prevents pregnancy in the first few days after sex. Containing a concentrated dose of the progestin hormone found in daily birth control pills, Plan B reduces the risk of pregnancy by up to 89 percent when taken within 72 hours of sexual intercourse. And the sooner a woman takes it, the better it works.

For a complete timeline of the Plan B OTC process please visit: www.rhtp.org.

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